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Labor Market Digest, April 1995

Maine Bureau of Employment Security

Maine Division of Manpower Research

Maine Labor Market Research

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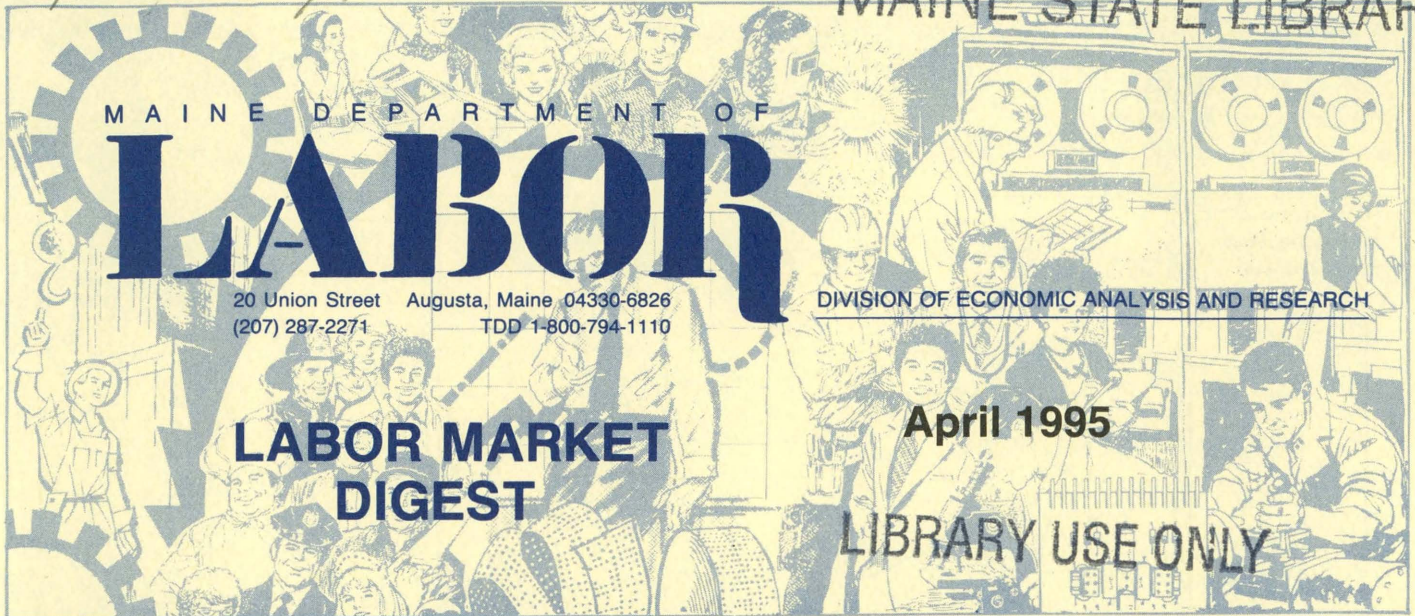
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The Labor Market Information Newsletter on Maine Economic Activity

It's Time for Maine Blueberries

Every August the blueberry harvest in Maine gets into full gear. Last year about 5,000 hand rakers harvested the blueberry crop. The harvested crop was frozen, canned, and fresh packed, employing more Maine residents in processing plants. As a result of the blueberry industry's need for supplies and materials, and the workers in the industry spending their wages, many other jobs were supported in the local economies.

The wild (lowbush) blueberry is one of only three species of berry native to North America. The area of commercial growth includes Coastal Maine, the Canadian Maritimes, and the province of Quebec. The State of Maine produces nearly half of the annual commercial crop.

The lowbush blueberry plant is 6 to 18 inches high and grows into large colonies by means of underground shoots. The interlocking root system allow blueberries to grow in thin rocky soil. These areas are often called barrens due to their stark appearance. In eastern Maine and some smaller areas the fields are burned or mowed every second or third year in the spring while the ground is still wet. This kills weeds and underbrush and prunes the blueberry plants.

Berries are harvested in alternate years. Thus, only half of the approximately 60,000 acres of blueberry barrens, which stretch from Kennebunk to Calais, are harvested annually. The fruit, which is usually light blue in color, ripens in late July and August, although harvesting may extend into September in the downeast area. Blueberries are more than 80 percent water and, as such, the product size and crop weight are heavily dependent on proper weather conditions or the intervention of growers in the form of irrigation and crop management. Approximately 60 percent of the blueberries produced in Maine come from Washington County.

From 1988 to 1994, Maine wild blueberry production¹ averaged 57,589,000 pounds and included three record crops in five years (1988, 1990, and 1992). Last year, 59,400,000 pounds of blueberries were harvested. The farm price² (raw product price) was \$.30 - \$.35 per pound for an approximate value of \$20 million. The processed product price (value added) was \$.70 per pound, which doubled the farm price and added over \$41 million to the economy of the State of Maine.

¹Pounds harvested from the New England Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.

²Product price from the Maine Blueberry Commission.

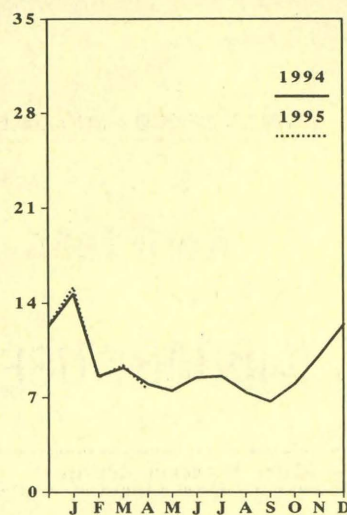
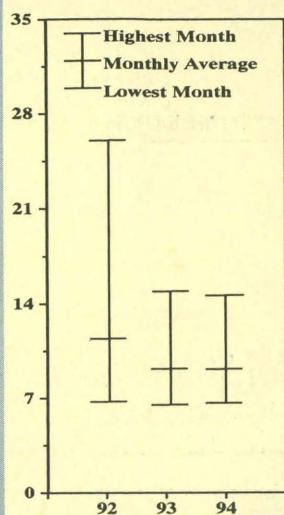
by Craig Holland, District Manager
Labor Market Information
Northeast District



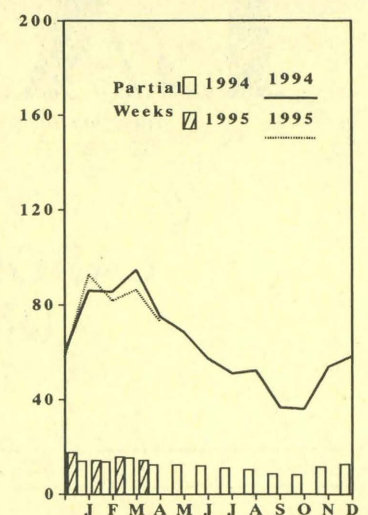
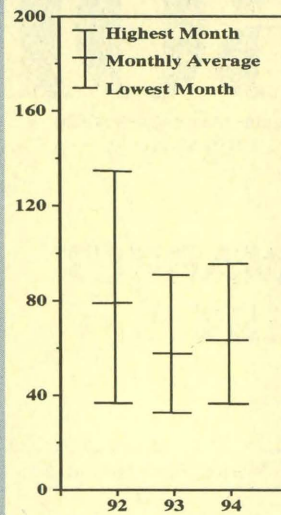
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UI Initial Claims in Thousands



UI Intrastate Weeks Claimed in Thousands



Unemployment Insurance Quality Control

The Maine Department of Labor operates a Quality Control Program which audits the payment of unemployment compensation benefits to determine the accuracy of those payments. Each week twelve payments are randomly selected as an audit sample, and approximately 16 hours are devoted to reviewing every aspect of a single payment. The investigators interview the claimant and his or her last employer, audit all payroll records which affect the claim, verify documentation relative to issues such as pension receipt and dependency allowance, and conduct in-person interviews with each employer that the claimant listed as a work search contact.

The investigations for CY 1994 showed the biggest category of errors by percentage of dollars overpaid was work search issues (56.1 percent). Eligibility issues accounted for the next largest amount overpaid (14.8 percent), which includes ability to work, availability to work, and refusal of jobs or referrals to jobs followed by benefit year earnings issues (13.1percent).

Responsibility for the overpayments lay mostly with the claimants who were the cause of 89.5 percent of all dollars overpaid. The next largest category of responsibility was instances where the claimant and the agency were jointly responsible for 5.2 percent, followed by the employers at 3.5 percent.

Summary of Quality Control Investigations, CY 1994

Item	Number of Payments	Dollars Paid	Item	Percentage of Dollars	95% Confidence Interval (+/-)
Population Sample	705,838	106,921,225	Proper Payment	89.6	2.8
	614	103,952	Overpayments	10.4	2.8
			Underpayments	0.7	0.3

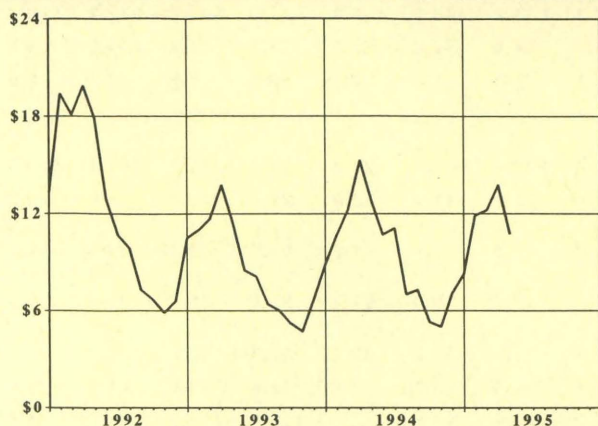


Selected Employment Security Activities



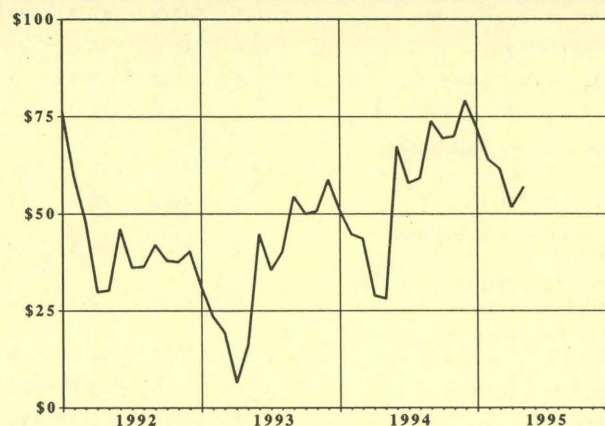
Unemployment Insurance Benefit Payments

in Millions
(Total includes Maine's Portion of Extended Benefits)



Unemployment Compensation Fund Balance

in Millions
(End of Month)



Earnings and Workweek of Production Workers in Manufacturing Industries

AREA AND INDUSTRY	AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS			AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS			AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS			ANNUAL AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS		
	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	1992	1993	1994
STATEWIDE												
Manufacturing.....	\$485.13	\$484.79	\$480.62	39.7	39.9	40.8	\$12.22	\$12.15	\$11.78	\$11.38	\$11.63	\$11.95
Durable Goods.....	480.80	485.50	470.34	40.1	39.6	40.2	11.99	12.26	11.70	11.14	11.43	11.88
Lumber and Wood Products.....	396.26	402.29	381.97	41.8	40.8	41.7	9.48	9.86	9.16	9.25	9.33	9.56
Primary and Fabricated Metals.....	443.37	439.56	443.69	39.8	39.6	39.9	11.14	11.10	11.12	10.45	11.00	10.97
Industrial Machinery and Equipment.....	569.78	562.53	638.91	42.3	42.2	45.8	13.47	13.33	13.95	12.82	13.32	13.89
Electronic and Other Electric Equipment.....	413.20	404.08	400.72	40.0	37.8	38.2	10.33	10.69	10.49	10.02	10.33	10.71
Transportation Equipment.....	614.38	643.02	574.53	37.6	38.9	38.2	16.34	16.53	15.04	14.09	14.64	15.18
Other Durable Goods.....	381.64	377.33	364.51	40.3	38.9	40.1	9.47	9.70	9.09	8.86	8.89	9.35
Nondurable Goods.....	490.20	484.81	488.99	39.5	40.2	41.3	12.41	12.06	11.84	11.57	11.79	12.01
Food and Kindred Products.....	332.22	339.71	335.74	33.9	34.7	34.4	9.80	9.79	9.76	9.15	9.34	9.55
Textile Mill Products.....	432.63	436.87	417.31	41.8	43.6	47.1	10.35	10.02	8.86	9.03	9.49	9.33
Apparel and Other Textile Products.....	302.06	297.52	288.56	37.2	37.9	36.9	8.12	7.85	7.82	7.65	7.95	8.08
Paper and Allied Products.....	776.99	751.69	752.58	43.7	43.4	44.4	17.78	17.32	16.95	16.25	16.63	17.02
Leather and Leather Products.....	318.85	324.17	316.61	37.6	38.5	38.8	8.48	8.42	8.16	7.92	8.00	8.32
Other Nondurable Goods.....	411.68	408.99	429.45	37.7	39.1	40.4	10.92	10.46	10.63	10.07	10.28	10.62
PORTLAND MSA												
Manufacturing.....	424.27	426.09	418.70	38.5	38.7	39.5	11.02	11.01	10.60	10.55	10.68	10.78
LEWISTON/AUBURN MSA												
Manufacturing.....	402.09	387.05	398.90	38.7	38.9	42.8	10.39	9.95	9.32	9.53	9.82	9.76

Female Labor Force in Maine in Thousands

U.S. Consumer Price Index

ITEM ^{1/}	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago
Labor Force	295.6	289.5	288.5
Unemployment (Percent)	13.6	16.1	23.6
Resident Employed	4.6%	5.6%	8.2%
	282.0	273.4	264.9

BASE PERIOD
(1982-1984 = 100) All Items (CPI-U)

This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	Last Dec.
151.9	151.4	147.4	149.7

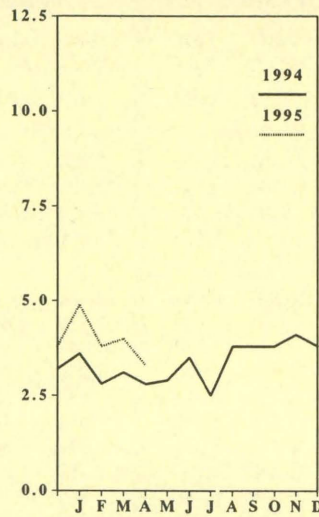
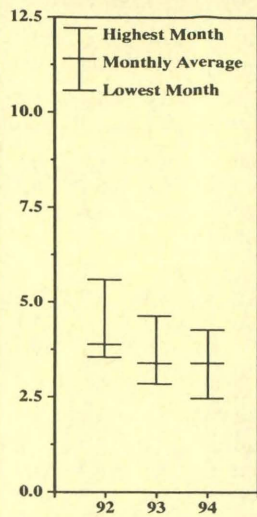
Percent Change for Past Month	+0.3%
Percent Change from 12 Months Ago	+3.1%
Percent Change from Last December	+1.5%

^{1/} Current figures preliminary; last month and year ago figures revised.

Source: Female labor force estimates are developed by, and solely the responsibility of, the Maine Division of Economic Analysis and Research.

New Applications For Work

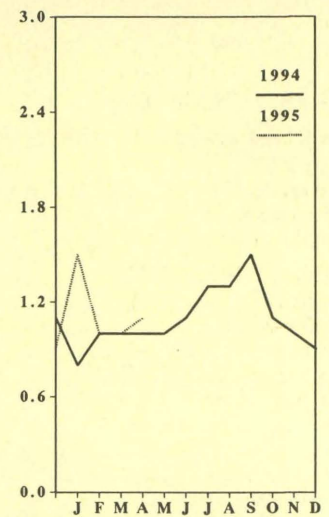
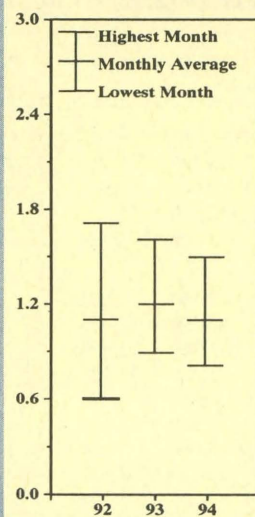
in Thousands



Nonfarm Placements

in Thousands

(Excludes Placements of Less than Three Days Duration)



Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment by Place of Work (in Thousands)

ITEM	STATEWIDE			PORTLAND MSA			LEWISTON-AUBURN MSA		
	THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	YEAR AGO	THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	YEAR AGO	THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	YEAR AGO
Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment 1/.....	530.6	522.3	518.5	127.5	127.7	126.5	40.8	40.4	39.8
Goods Producing.....	110.4	108.5	108.4	17.9	18.6	18.4	10.3	10.0	9.9
Construction and Mining.....	19.8	17.6	18.8	4.9	4.9	4.9	1.6	1.5	1.4
Building Construction.....	4.6	4.1	4.6	0.9	1.0	1.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Special Trade Contractors.....	12.3	10.9	11.4	3.8	3.7	3.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Manufacturing.....	90.6	90.9	89.6	13.0	13.7	13.5	8.7	8.5	8.5
Durable Goods.....	40.7	41.3	39.6	5.5	6.1	5.9	2.3	2.2	2.2
Lumber and Wood Products.....	9.6	10.2	9.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Primary and Fabricated Metals.....	3.4	3.5	3.5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Industrial Machinery and Equipment.....	4.5	4.5	4.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Electronic and other Elect. Equip.....	7.4	7.3	6.9	2.1	2.1	1.9	n/a	n/a	n/a
Transportation Equipment.....	11.7	11.8	12.0	(d)	(d)	(d)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Durable Goods 2/.....	4.1	4.0	3.7	2.2	2.8	2.8	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nondurable Goods.....	49.9	49.6	50.0	7.5	7.6	7.6	6.4	6.3	6.3
Food and Kindred Products.....	6.5	6.3	6.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Textile Mill Products.....	5.4	5.3	5.6	(d)	(d)	(d)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Apparel and Other Textile Products.....	2.4	2.4	2.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Paper and Allied Products.....	14.6	14.5	15.7	(d)	(d)	(d)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Printing and Publishing.....	5.7	5.8	5.4	1.7	1.8	1.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rubber and Misc. Plastic Products.....	3.3	3.3	3.2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leather and Leather Products.....	10.6	10.7	9.8	1.1	1.1	1.1	2.0	2.0	2.1
Footwear (except Rubber).....	8.7	8.9	8.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Nondurable Goods 3/.....	1.4	1.3	1.5	2.6	2.6	2.8	4.4	4.3	4.2
Service Producing.....	420.2	413.8	410.1	109.6	109.1	108.1	30.5	30.4	29.9
Transportation and Public Utilities.....	22.4	22.2	22.1	5.7	5.7	6.0	1.7	1.7	1.6
Wholesale Trade.....	24.0	23.7	23.3	8.6	8.5	8.7	2.0	2.1	1.9
Retail Trade.....	107.5	104.0	104.0	30.1	29.9	27.6	8.0	7.9	7.9
General Merchandise Stores.....	11.9	11.6	11.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Food Stores.....	19.1	18.7	18.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Eating and Drinking Places.....	32.2	29.6	32.1	8.8	8.3	8.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate.....	26.6	26.5	26.3	12.1	12.1	12.3	1.9	1.9	1.8
Banking.....	9.5	9.4	9.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Insurance Carriers, Brokers and Agents.....	11.3	11.4	11.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Services.....	144.5	141.8	137.0	36.0	35.8	36.0	12.1	12.0	11.9
Hotels and Other Lodging Places.....	7.5	6.1	7.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Business Services.....	18.0	17.1	14.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Health Services.....	50.5	50.3	50.3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Federal Government.....	13.3	13.4	14.8	2.0	2.0	2.1	0.3	0.3	0.3
State Government.....	27.4	27.7	27.4	4.7	4.8	5.0	0.7	0.7	0.7
Local Government.....	54.5	54.5	55.2	10.4	10.3	10.4	3.8	3.8	3.8
Involved in Labor-Management Disputes.....	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

1/ Employment figures relate to full- and part-time wage and salary workers in pay periods including the 12th of the month. Domestic workers in private households, proprietors, self-employed, and unpaid family workers are excluded. 2/ Includes Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes: Statewide - 25, 32, 38, 39; Portland - 24, 25, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39. 3/ Includes SIC codes: Statewide - 28, 29; Portland - 20, 22, 23, 26, 30; Lewiston - 20, 22, 23, 26, 27. 4/ Regular teachers are included in summer months whether or not specifically paid in those months. n/a - data not available in sufficient detail for publication. * Less than 50. (d) Nondisclosure item. Source: Nonfarm wage and salary employment by place of work and earnings, and workweek of production workers in manufacturing industries are developed by the Maine Division of Economic Analysis and Research in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment

Area 1/	LABOR FORCE 2/			RESIDENT EMPLOYED			UNEMPLOYMENT Number			UNEMPLOYMENT Percent of Labor Force		
	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago
MAINE-STATEWIDE (000).....	617.4	617.2	609.5	576.7	573.2	558.4	40.7	43.9	51.1	6.6	7.1	8.4
MAJOR LABOR MARKETS												
Bangor MSA.....	48,000	48,300	46,600	45,700	45,600	43,600	2,400	2,700	3,000	4.9	5.6	6.5
Lewiston-Auburn MSA.....	49,300	50,000	48,800	46,400	46,800	44,700	2,900	3,200	4,100	5.8	6.4	8.5
Portland MSA.....	117,800	119,900	115,900	113,000	114,600	109,400	4,900	5,300	6,500	4.1	4.4	5.6
Portsmouth-Rochester PMSA.....	n/a	n/a	102,700	n/a	n/a	98,400	n/a	n/a	4,200	n/a	n/a	4.1
OTHER LABOR MARKETS												
Augusta.....	43,720	43,560	43,630	40,740	40,390	40,560	2,980	3,180	3,070	6.8	7.3	7.0
Bath-Brunswick.....	34,730	34,390	34,000	33,220	32,570	31,930	1,520	1,810	2,070	4.4	5.3	6.1
Belfast.....	12,030	11,760	11,690	11,090	10,620	10,470	940	1,140	1,220	7.8	9.7	10.4
Biddeford.....	31,870	31,020	32,430	30,170	28,940	30,120	1,700	2,080	2,310	5.3	6.7	7.1
Boothbay Harbor.....	7,250	6,860	7,380	6,830	6,340	6,860	430	520	530	5.9	7.6	7.1
Bucksport.....	4,970	4,840	4,920	4,610	4,420	4,500	350	430	430	7.1	8.8	8.7
Calais.....	5,090	5,080	5,220	4,410	4,440	4,300	680	640	920	13.4	12.7	17.6
Dexter-Pittsfield.....	12,590	12,490	12,620	11,420	11,260	11,130	1,160	1,230	1,500	9.2	9.9	11.8
Dover-Foxcroft.....	7,080	7,230	7,100	6,520	6,630	6,380	560	600	720	7.8	8.3	10.1
Ellsworth-Bar Harbor.....	18,060	16,590	18,210	16,520	14,540	16,220	1,540	2,040	2,000	8.5	12.3	11.0
Farmington.....	18,290	18,630	17,470	16,890	17,350	15,740	1,400	1,290	1,730	7.7	6.9	9.9
Fort Kent.....	3,750	3,800	3,790	3,130	3,280	3,090	620	520	700	16.6	13.8	18.5
Greenville.....	1,040	1,060	1,080	890	930	920	150	130	170	14.5	12.2	15.3
Houlton.....	6,730	6,710	6,580	6,100	6,130	5,880	640	580	690	9.4	8.6	10.5
Jonesport-Milbridge.....	3,620	3,490	3,420	3,130	2,940	2,880	490	550	550	13.6	15.7	16.0
Kittery-York.....	19,160	19,160	19,010	18,620	18,510	18,240	540	650	770	2.8	3.4	4.1
Lincoln-Howland.....	5,540	5,660	5,550	4,960	5,130	4,840	580	530	710	10.5	9.3	12.8
Machias-Eastport.....	6,450	6,360	6,440	5,700	5,550	5,500	750	810	940	11.6	12.7	14.6
Madawaska.....	4,060	4,000	4,020	3,720	3,650	3,550	340	340	480	8.5	8.5	11.8
Millinocket-East Millinocket.....	5,250	5,350	5,490	4,610	4,740	4,770	650	610	730	12.3	11.5	13.3
Norway-Paris.....	10,370	10,230	9,940	9,520	9,330	8,720	840	900	1,220	8.1	8.8	12.2
Outer Bangor.....	7,330	7,310	7,110	6,730	6,630	6,300	600	680	810	8.2	9.3	11.3
Patten-Island Falls.....	2,180	2,280	2,150	1,940	2,080	1,860	240	200	280	10.8	8.6	13.1
Presque Isle-Caribou.....	20,390	20,610	20,610	17,930	18,120	17,710	2,460	2,490	2,900	12.1	12.1	14.1
Rockland.....	21,400	20,760	20,380	20,280	19,600	19,060	1,120	1,160	1,320	5.2	5.6	6.5
Rumford.....	9,830	10,570	9,940	8,820	9,760	8,680	1,010	810	1,260	10.3	7.7	12.7
Sanford.....	21,200	21,430	20,430	19,830	19,820	18,740	1,360	1,610	1,690	6.4	7.5	8.3
Sebago Lakes Region.....	12,150	11,510	11,810	11,440	10,780	10,790	720	720	1,020	5.9	6.3	8.6
Skowhegan.....	15,600	15,470	15,290	13,960	13,870	13,420	1,640	1,600	1,880	10.5	10.3	12.3
Stonington.....	5,070	5,010	4,930	4,770	4,600	4,600	300	410	340	6.0	8.1	6.8
Van Buren.....	1,580	1,600	1,520	1,370	1,380	1,300	220	220	220	13.7	14.0	14.6
Waterville.....	23,890	24,190	24,040	21,830	21,900	21,720	2,060	2,290	2,320	8.6	9.5	9.7
NEW ENGLAND STATES (000)												
Connecticut.....	n/a	n/a	1,715.0	n/a	n/a	1,623.1	n/a	n/a	91.9	n/a	n/a	5.4
Massachusetts.....	3,121.0	3,170.0	3,108.0	2,945.0	3,005.0	2,927.0	177.0	165.0	182.0	5.7	5.2	5.8
New Hampshire.....	n/a	n/a	621.6	n/a	n/a	589.9	n/a	n/a	31.7	n/a	n/a	5.1
Rhode Island.....	n/a	n/a	498.9	n/a	n/a	464.5	n/a	n/a	34.4	n/a	n/a	6.9
Vermont.....	321.7	324.4	318.3	306.7	309.0	301.6	15.0	15.4	16.7	4.7	4.7	5.2
UNITED STATES(000).....	131,657	131,423	129,682	124,278	123,943	121,604	7,378	7,480	8,078	5.6	5.7	6.2

Footnotes

1/ Labor force, employment, and unemployment data for all areas are by place of residence and are not seasonally adjusted. Estimates made independently for each labor market area have been benchmarked to and extrapolated from the Current Population Survey estimates for the state. All data exclude members of the Armed Forces. Data are rounded for publishing purposes. Employment and unemployment may not add to labor force due to rounding; MSA - Metropolitan Statistical Area. n/a indicates that the information was not available at the time of printing.

2/ Current estimates preliminary. Last month and year ago estimates revised.

3/ Kittery-York is the five-town Maine portion of the Portsmouth-Rochester PMSA which includes towns in both Maine and New Hampshire.

Source: These data are developed by the Maine Division of Economic Analysis and Research in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Mid-Month Insured Unemployment

ITEM	STATEWIDE			PORTLAND MSA			LEWISTON-AUBURN MSA		
	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago	This Month	Last Month	Year Ago
Number of continued-week claimants*	15,368	18,115	17,075	1,865	2,293	2,232	1,093	1,327	1,427

* Continued-week claimants are less partials for week including the 12th of the month.

Civilian Labor Force and Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment in Maine

Seasonally Adjusted in Thousands

ITEM	1994									1995			
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
Civilian Labor Force 1/	614.6	609.6	610.1	609.9	609.2	608.7	609.1	608.8	609.2	619.7	623.4	617.2	617.4
Resident Employment	568.2	567.1	566.3	565.6	564.7	564.3	564.8	566.1	567.1	584.9	588.9	573.2	576.7
Unemployment	46.4	42.5	43.8	44.3	44.5	44.4	44.4	42.8	42.1	34.8	34.5	43.9	40.7
Percent of Labor Force	7.6	7.0	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.0	6.9	5.6	5.5	7.1	6.6
Nonfarm Wage and Salary Employment 2/	529.8	530.7	530.7	533.9	534.2	534.8	535.4	535.3	537.3	539.0	541.1	541.7	542.2
Construction	21.3	20.8	20.5	21.2	21.3	21.5	22.0	21.9	22.0	21.8	21.7	21.8	22.2
Manufacturing, Durable Goods	41.0	40.9	41.0	40.9	40.8	41.0	41.2	41.4	41.6	41.7	42.0	41.9	42.1
Manufacturing, Nondurable Goods	50.5	50.5	50.4	50.8	50.9	50.8	50.9	51.0	51.2	51.5	51.1	50.5	50.4
Transportation and Public Utilities	22.7	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.5	22.8	23.3	22.9	22.9	22.7	22.7	22.8	23.0
Wholesale Trade	23.7	23.6	23.5	23.7	23.8	23.8	23.8	23.7	23.8	23.8	23.9	24.1	24.4
Retail Trade	109.8	109.9	110.5	112.9	113.2	112.8	111.6	111.7	112.4	112.9	113.6	113.5	113.5
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	26.4	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.7	26.8	26.8	26.9	26.8	26.7	26.8	26.7
Services	139.9	140.7	140.5	141.9	142.6	142.7	142.9	143.2	143.6	146.1	147.0	147.9	147.6
Government	94.4	94.9	94.9	93.0	92.4	92.5	92.7	92.6	92.8	91.6	92.3	92.3	92.2

1/ Place of residence.

2/ Place of work.

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